

# Mentor still plagued by flooding woes

*Fire chief retiring*

by IDALITA RASO

**MENTOR** - City council and officials are still dealing with the aftermath of the never-ending severe rain events.

Following two severe rain events, April 23 and 25, the city received about 120 complaints, the majority related to storm sewer flooding.

At the May 3 council meeting, Mentor engineer Dave Swiger said the city is well above average rainfall for this time of year - 7 inches instead of the average 2.5 inches. The first event dropped 1.46 inches in two hours, causing several streets to close, primarily during the early morning hours, including Heisley Road near Diamond Centre, Bellflower Road, and Hopkins Road between Hendricks and Markwood. The second rain event produced a total rainfall of 1.39 inches during a 10-hour period.

Councilman at Large Scott Marn asked council if a 10-year-old plan involving detention/retention basins could be reviewed.

Council President Robert Shiner said it would be added to a work session scheduled

for 5:30 p.m. May 17.

Councilman Edward Walsh (Ward 3) asked council for permission to form a stormwater committee along with Marn and Councilwoman Carolyn Bucey (Ward 2).

As a result of the relentless rains, the soccer fields at Bellflower Park, used by Mentor Soccer Club, have been reported damaged.

"The fields at Bellflower are shot," said Bob Martin, Parks, Recreation and Public Facilities director. "It's probably going to be June before we'll be able to get the equipment on them to work on them."

The soccer club moved to the Mentor High School stadium. The club will be invoiced for the total repair to the fields, Martin said.

## **In other council business:**

Council revisited an amendment to the ordinance that would legalize soil-processing businesses under certain conditions and protect surrounding properties by reducing the amount of space required between businesses involved in the excavation, demolition, processing of outdoor storage of soil, mulch, other earth sub-

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stances, debris or other types of fill materials.

The measure prohibits soil-processing businesses in all zoning districts except M-1 Light Manufacturing and M-2 Heavy Manufacturing districts, where it is conditionally permitted, within the buffer of any district property line.

The amendment had been placed on second reading pending more research during council's meeting April 19.

Shiner asked council to adopt a 500-foot distance and make special conditions for certain operations.

"There are special conditions where flying debris would harm other businesses. We could adjust the distance and give proper notice to surrounding businesses - making that part of the conditional use permit," said Shiner. "In certain cases 1,000 feet might be more appropriate."

Councilman Ronald Micchia (Ward 4) said he was contacted by a business that produces a medical device that requires a sterilized environment.

"I'm not sure 500 feet is going to be enough," said Micchia. "I think we should take another look at the distance."

Shiner said 500 feet is just an average and special stipulations would apply in the conditional use permit, depending on the proximity to businesses that would be affected.

Law Director Richard Hennig urged council to take their time in deciding on the minimum distance, reminding council of the past two lawsuits.

"We should have specific standards written in the legislation so there's no argument - it cannot be vague or subjective," said Hennig.

Marn also urged council to wait before deciding on a 500-foot standard.

"The \$200,000 lawsuit didn't come from the business across the street, it came from the people down the street, some 2,000 feet away," said Marn.

Resident Jack Walker, owner of Walker Printing located at 9517 Jackson St. stood before council against the 500-foot buffer requirement.

"It was trucks 24/7 hauling debris. The wear and tear on Jefferson Street alone cost the city money," said Walker. "I heard the city can exempt themselves and can find a site to grind up stumps and brush. But the grinding of concrete and things that get

trucked in from other communities that produces dirt and dust, will harm my machines and business."

Shiner said he was looking at the bigger picture and hopes to protect everyone, while solving the problem.

The measure was placed on third reading pending more research.

Council had three presentations at its May 3 meeting. During the first presentation, City Manager Kenneth Filipiak announced that the city received an award and a check for \$1,000 from Reader's Digest. Mentor was one of a 100 cities given a stimulus grant ranging from \$1,000 to \$40,000 from the Reader's Digest "We Hear You America" 100 Cities/100 Days RV Sweepstakes Tour.

Filipek said the city could win a \$40,000 grant and the Reader's Digest recreational vehicle as well, if enough persons would vote for the city.

"I urge every resident to go to [www.rd.com](http://www.rd.com) and vote for our city," said Filipiak.

The city won the grant because of the Western Reserve Model Railroad Museum that was featured in their annual "Best of America" issue. The museum is ranked as the world's largest model railroad museum

and run completely by volunteers. But the sluggish economy has caused the museum to struggle financially in recent years.

Shiner presented Rick Montgomery, the museum's curator and board director the check as a donation to the museum.

"It's amazing," said Montgomery. "It's one of the best things to happen to us. We have the world largest America Flyer train layout and the largest three-rail, O-gauge layout in the world."

He added that he hopes the magazine draws some attention to what the museum has to offer. Montgomery said donations have improved slightly since the museum's financial predicament was first reported.

"People are coming in and giving," he said. "We're not there yet, but at least we're headed in the right direction."

The Western Reserve Model Railroad Museum is located at 7230 Justin Way. It is open Monday and Wednesday from 10 a.m. until 9 p.m., Tuesday and Thursday from 3 until 9 p.m. and Saturday and Sunday from 10 a.m. until 6 p.m.

Admission is free, but donations are accepted.

During the second presen-

tation, Deputy Fire Chief Tom Talcott presented Deputy Chief Pete Grendze a certificate of Completion for the Executive Fire Officer at the National Fire Academy.

The National Fire Academy is a senior joint venture between United States Fire Administration and the National Fire Academy and its purpose is to develop leadership, vision and professionalism of senior fire officers.

Grendze graduated from the four-year program and completed a required publishable, applied research project.

During the third presentation Shiner made a resolution for Talcott, who is retiring. Talcott has served in Mentor's fire department since 1977.

"Tom was called Turbo Tommy' because he was on top of everything," Shiner said. "You are leaving a void in the city - being a former fireman, it's been an honor to work with you."

Council passed an ordinance to authorize a \$3,500 revision to appropriations for the police department to purchase 13 new Taser units. The department received a partial grant from the Ohio Office of Criminal Justice, leaving a \$3,500 remaining balance. The total amount of

the new Taser units is \$10,644.

Council also passed an ordinance authorizing the city manager to enter into a contract with Mar-King Construction for pavement lane marking.

The city received six bids, with Mar-King giving the lowest bid of \$243,953.

"This is the second year in a row the city has selected Mar-King Construction. All work will be done at night, and should not inconvenience motorists," said Public Works Director Matt Schweikert.

Council passed a resolution declaring it necessary to improve streets with electric lighting. Finance Director David Malinowski said the street lighting cost is at 85 cent per \$1,000 per assets value and is up five cents higher than in the previous two years. The city will collect about \$1 million.

Manager's Report:

Filipek said the county health district will conduct their rabies vaccinating program through May 20.

Filipek welcomed new businesses to the city of Mentor including Bike Hub located at 7430 Mentor Ave. The remodeled Dairy Queen at 7695 Lakeshore Blvd. reopened on May 2.